

# District 25 News

MAKIKI, TANTALUS, MCCULLY, PAPA KOLEA

May 2007

Dear Neighbors,

On Thursday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, the 2007 legislative session came to a close after marathon sessions of debate on tax relief, workers compensation, animal cruelty laws, limited prescriptive authority for psychologists, and the reorganization and management of the public hospital system by regional boards.

The measures we debated are now being reviewed by the Governor for final passage into law. The Governor has until July 10th, or 45 working days after adjournment of session, to review legislation and then either sign, veto, or allow a bill to become law without her signature.

The end of this session marks the end of my first year as your State Representative. I am grateful for the opportunity to represent you and to tackle the serious problems faced by so many of our working families. It has truly been my honor to serve you.

During the interim, I will be walking the District to gather your thoughts on this session and your suggestions for the 2008 session. Please feel free to stop me if you see me in the supermarket, at the park, or on the street.

If I don't see you out in the community, please contact my office if you have any questions, concerns, ideas for legislation, or any suggestions on ways we can improve our community. I can be reached by phone at 586-9425, by fax at 586-9431, or by email at [repbelatti@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:repbelatti@capitol.hawaii.gov).

Mahalo,



DELLA AU BELATTI

State Representative, District 25

*Rep. Belatti sign-waves with AARP on the corner of Piikoi and South Beretania Streets to promote pedestrian safety.*

*(See story on p.3 for updates on bills passed regarding pedestrian safety in 2007 session.)*



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## Got E-MAIL?

Because of budgetary constraints, I am unable to mail newsletters to every resident in the District. One way to reduce costs is to email newsletters.

**If you would like to receive this newsletter by email, please let my office know by sending an email to:**

**[repbelatti@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:repbelatti@capitol.hawaii.gov)**

# New Condominium Laws Help Condo Residents & Associations

After hearing concerns from condominium associations and residents, the 2007 Legislature passed new measures to help residents living in condominiums, particularly affecting areas such as Makiki, Punchbowl, and Kakaako.

Three key bills were passed by the House and Senate that are instrumental to ensuring long-term housing for condominium lessees, protecting the privacy of residents' personal information, and allowing associations to collect delinquent maintenance fees.

## Senate Bill 600

In order to give greater flexibility to those living in condominiums whose leases will eventually expire, Senate Bill 600 was passed to encourage the conversion of leased properties to fee so residents would not be forced to give up their homes when their leases expire.

To provide this incentive to landowners, the bill exempts from taxation one hundred per cent of capital gains realized during taxable years 2008-2012 from the sale of

leased fee interest in condominium units to association of apartment owners or residential cooperative corporations.

## Senate Bill 920

As identity theft has grown over the last several years, more and more residents who have their personal information such as addresses and phone numbers registered with their condominium association have begun to worry that such lists could be misused or sold without the consent of those on it.

Senate Bill 920 limits the use of condominium association membership lists by the condominium managing agent, resident manager, and board. Specifically, Senate Bill 920 prohibits the use or distribution of any membership list, including for commercial or political purposes, without the prior written consent of the association's board.

## Senate Bill 923

Signed into law by the Governor on May 17th, Senate Bill 923 assists condominium associations in collecting delinquent maintenance fees in the event of a foreclosure. Specifically, this bill makes permanent the law that allows associations to assess delinquent maintenance fees against purchasers of units to which the fees are attached under a foreclosure proceeding.

### Schedule *Talk Story* Session with Rep. Belatti and your Condo Association Board or with Condo Residents:

Rep. Belatti is available to meet with board members or residents to talk about district or statewide concerns. If you would like to schedule a *Talk Story* session in your condominium, please contact Rep. Belatti at 586-9425 or at [repbelatti@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:repbelatti@capitol.hawaii.gov).





# New Pedestrian Safety Laws Update

After much discussion between the House and Senate, the 2007 Legislature passed two bills to immediately address pedestrian safety concerns on our busy streets.

Among the advocacy groups present throughout session, AARP Hawaii led the charge on this year's legislation. After completing a state-wide audit of 50 intersections in 2005, AARP Hawaii advanced on this year's Legislature with comprehensive recommendations including the retrofitting of non-pedestrian friendly areas, ongoing public education for drivers and pedestrians, and implementing pedestrian-conscious land use decisions that combine engineering, education, and enforcement tools.

Senate Bill 1191 implements many of AARP Hawaii's recommendations. Senate Bill 1191 authorizes:

- **\$1.8 million** over a two-year period to the Department of Transportation to implement improvements including, but not limited to, (1) the recalibration of traffic signals to lengthen crossing times, (2) the acceleration of the replacement of non-timer crossing signals with traffic countdown timers, (3) the implementation of pilot projects that use pedestrian-activated flashing signals, in-pavement warning lights, and portable hand-carried signs and flags; and
- **\$1.2 million** in matching funds to the counties to purchase and install traffic countdown timers at county-controlled intersections and other pedestrian safety improvements.

House Bill 375 addresses enforcement concerns by clarifying a driver's duty to stop for a pedestrian in a crosswalk. House Bill 375 also

provides stronger enforcement tools by imposing increased fines and the revocation of one's driver's license on drivers and pedestrians who repeatedly fail to comply with crosswalk laws.

One measure that did not survive the session was a proposal for red-light cameras that would have captured those vehicles and drivers who drive through red lights at intersections. Discussion will likely continue on this proposal in future sessions.

Although pedestrian safety requires constant vigilance by those on our streets, this year's bills could not come soon enough as our community has some of the most dangerous intersections in the state. According to a 2005 study conducted by the Honolulu Advertiser, the Makiki, Lower Punchbowl, and Tantalus area ranked 13<sup>th</sup> for number of pedestrian fatalities in Hawaii from 1996 to 2003.

If you have comments or suggestions on this year's bills, the red-light camera proposal, or other proposals, please feel free to contact Rep. Belatti with your comments at 586-9425 or at [repbelatti@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:repbelatti@capitol.hawaii.gov).





# Preserving PEARL HARBOR



This month, I had the honor of touring the Pearl Harbor Historic Sites that includes the USS Arizona Memorial Park, the USS Bowfin Submarine Museum, the USS Missouri Memorial, and the Pacific Aviation Museum.

This year marks the 66th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, and nearly the 30th year since the Arizona Memorial Visitor Center at Pearl Harbor first opened its doors.

Completed in 1980, the Visitor Center includes a museum and theaters that educate visitors about the history of Pearl Harbor, and serves as a gateway to the USS Arizona Memorial.

Today, the Visitor Center sits in an area that was once open water during the infamous attack. The structure was designed to adapt to the settling fill that it was built on.

Unfortunately, over the years the Center has sunk to almost twice the depth that it was designed to, and soon will no longer be structurally safe.

Recognizing the local and national historic importance of Pearl Harbor, the Legislature this year appropriated \$1,000,000 to replace the aging Center. This money supplements funds being raised by the Arizona Memorial Museum Association and will help to pay for a new visitor center that is slated to begin construction later this year.

This new center, the Pearl Harbor Memorial Museum and Visitor Center, will continue to be a place where history is remembered, artifacts are treasured, and memories are honored. This new center will also serve as the central entrance and ticketing location for all visitors to the Pearl Harbor Historic Sites.

There is still much work to be done to preserve this area for future generations. To see what you can do to help preserve our history, please visit the Pearl Harbor Memorial Fund website at: [www.pearlharbormemorial.com](http://www.pearlharbormemorial.com)



Pearl Harbor Survivor Herb Weatherwax shares stories with Rep. Belatti at the Arizona Memorial Visitor Center.

## **May is Military Appreciation Month!**

*In addition to remembering the sacrifices of those who came before us, it is important this Memorial Day to recognize the current role our men and women play in every branch of the armed forces. We appreciate your commitment and sacrifice no matter the course or cause. For this, we thank you.*

# The Pacific Aviation Museum Takes Flight

On December 7, 2006, the Pacific Aviation Museum opened its doors to the public.

The Museum is currently located in Hanger 37 on Ford Island, and will soon be expanding to two full-size adjacent hangers and the old Luke Field Control Tower as seen below.

Although the newest addition to the Pearl Harbor Historic Sites, the Pacific Aviation Museum chronicles a critical portion of our heritage in the Pacific dating back to World War II.

Currently on exhibit are fully restored aircraft and artifacts from around the Pacific theater, including one plane flown by former President George H.W. Bush, a B-25B similar to planes used in the Doolittle Raid, and a series of flight simulators that allow visitors to experience the thrill of flight for themselves.



*Museum Board President Clinton R. Churchill and Gen. Edward V. Richardson, USAF (Ret.) with Della in front of George H.W. Bush's trainer aircraft.*

Future plans for museum expansion include a hanger dedicated to war in the Pacific during World War II, and a third hanger covering the Korean War, Cold War, Vietnam, and on to the present day.

Like all of the Pearl Harbor Historic Sites, the Pacific Aviation Museum is run by a non-profit organization and continues to raise funds for its operation and growth.

To contact the Pacific Aviation Museum for tours, or see what you can do to assist their organizing and fundraising efforts, please call (808) 441-1000, or visit them on the web at [www.pacificaviationmuseum.org](http://www.pacificaviationmuseum.org).





# Priority Healthcare Measures Pass Out of the Legislature

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This year's health-care legislation will give Hawaii residents greater access to medical care and restore accountability to insurance providers to keep healthcare costs manageable.

## **Healthcare Coverage for All Keiki**

The Hawaii Uninsured Project estimates that there are about 5,000 children who fall into a gap group whose parents earn too much to qualify for state or federally funded health insurance programs, but still cannot afford any other form of health insurance.

Having recognized this, the Legislature worked to guarantee health care insurance for this gap group this session. House Bill 1008 protects the health of Hawaii's keiki by establishing the Hawaii Children's Health Care Program and the Hawaii Infant Care Program as temporary three-year pilot programs. These programs will provide health care coverage for children in Hawaii from birth to nineteen years old through a public-private partnership between the Department of Human Services and private insurance carriers.

## **Health Insurance Rate Regulation**

After previous laws regulating health insurance rates expired in 2006, the Legislature reenacted provisions to prohibit health insurance rates that are excessive, inadequate, or unfairly discriminatory by passing Senate Bill 12.

This measure brings accountability back to the health insurance industry and will help ensure fair insurance rates for Hawaii residents.

## **Hawaii Rx-Plus Program Mandates Drug Rebates**

House Bill 10 strengthens Hawaii's Rx-Plus program to help residents without prescription drug insurance. This measure is intended to reduce prescription drug costs for Rx-Plus enrollees by mandating rebate agreements between drug manufacturers and the State.

## **Saving Kahuku Hospital**

The Legislature acted quickly to make emergency appropriations available to enable Kahuku Hospital to continue serving the communities of Oahu's North Shore and the Windward Coast.

House Bill 843 provides for the acquisition of Kahuku Hospital by the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation, and Senate Bill 1260 provides \$950,000 to continue immediate operations, preserve its hospital license, retain its certificate of need and critical access hospital designation, and settle its debts.

## **Adequate Compensation for Doctors**

The Legislature also moved to address inadequate Medicaid reimbursement rates to provide incentives for doctors with specialized practices to expand in rural communities who have limited access to certain types of healthcare.

A \$16,000,000 appropriation was made to increase physician reimbursement for Medicaid-eligible patients, and the Department of Human Services has been required to include an additional \$8,000,000 for the same purposes.

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**During the interim before the 2008 Legislative session, Rep. Belatti will continue to work on issues relating to affordability and access to quality health care. If you have any concerns or suggestions related to health policy in this state, please contact Rep. Belatti at 586-9425 or at [repbelatti@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:repbelatti@capitol.hawaii.gov).**